

899

CONCERNING  
SAME SEX MARRIAGE  
AND  
CIVIL UNIONS

Mary elizabeth-hager Dixon  
~~Monday~~ 7 May 2007



LET THERE BE ...

*A NEW CONNECTICUT COMPROMISE, 2007*

Let it begin here, and now! There are many among you who could write it ... All of you can be part of it.

It can begin here ... it really can ... if you but lead. After all,

THIS IS CONNECTICUT!

That being said, I would like to read from a testimony I wrote and presented to this Committee in Public Hearing on this subject Monday, February 7, 2005.

Introductory Remarks  
Connecticut General Assembly – Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony  
*House Bill 7395 – An Act Concerning Marriage Equality*  
Monday – 26 March 2007

Mary elizabeth-hager Dixon

TRANSCRIPTION OF EXTENDED NOTES  
WRITTEN DURING A PUBLIC HEARING  
OF  
THE JUCICIARY COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(*Subject Matter: Same Sex Marriage*)  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2005

THOSE ORIGINAL EXTENDED NOTES WERE  
USED AS THE BASIS FOR TESTIMONY GIVEN BY  
MARY elizabeth hager DIXON  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS ADJOURNED  
LATER THAT DAY

Good evening. My name is Mary elizabeth hager Dixon

I come before you today, as a Christian – firmly and deeply committed to the faith of my birth – who has spent a lifetime constantly reviewing and examining that faith, my understanding, acceptance, and sometimes rejection, of its various: teachings & tenets ... doctrinal & theological interpretations ... as well as – though admittedly to a lesser degree – the teachings and tenets of other religions.

As means of further introducing myself to you, I also mention that I have held for many years, certification as a History/Social Studies teacher at the secondary level. I believe strongly in the Separation of Church and State.

As in all the most important issues of life, issues related to the Separation of Church and State are not easy, nor clear-cut. Likewise, in all the most important issues in life, the devil is so often in the details.

I am sorry I was not able to be here earlier for the full hearing, but I just returned late Saturday after being out-of-state for an extended visit with family, hence I did not have time to prepare formal remarks, but I would like to share these thoughts which have come to mind as I sat here in this hearing listening, as I think they reflect a different point of view than those I have heard during the time I have been able to be here with you today. These thoughts I share today have developed over a long period of time. They are the result of much studied consideration and reflection however, I have never before written them down.

I did not sign up on either the support or oppose list for the legislation under consideration – for I think my position falls between support and opposition.

Page 1 of 2  
As presented – Monday 7 February 2005

Presented with Introductory Remarks – Monday 26 March 2007

I have felt for a long time that homosexual couples should absolutely have EQUALITY with heterosexual couples BEFORE THE LAW.

I believe also, that churches, synagogues and other religious communities should absolutely have the right to sanctify, or refrain from sanctifying, the union between two people according to their faith's beliefs, tenets and ecclesiastical law.

It is my position and strong belief, that neither our state nor our nation should be in the business of conveying the sanctity of sectarian religious blessing to anything.

I believe the term marriage should be stricken from all legal record and reference, in the same way as the Congregational Church was stricken from our law and record, as the established church of our state by our Connecticut State Constitution of 1818.

I believe the joining of all couples, homosexual and heterosexual, should be referred to by a new term BEFORE THE LAW – perhaps “Spousal Contract”, if that term has not been used in the past and does not have a discriminatory history or implication ... as the term “Civil Union” has for so many.

I believe the joining of couples BEFORE THE LAW – heterosexual and homosexual alike – should be accomplished in a brief civil formality in a town or city hall. Should couples wish, such a civil formality could be followed by an optional second personal/religious ceremony, much like the long established tradition in France and other European countries of heterosexual couples often having two marriage “ceremonies”.

I believe the term marriage should be left exclusively to religious and personal use.

I believe all legal rights, privileges and responsibilities of heterosexual couples should be accorded to homosexual couples.

I believe there is a reasonable and respectful solution to this important and difficult issue that guarantees EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW, and RESPECT FOR RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE [... and ensures the SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE, as well]\*.

\*[ ] Bracketed addition added Monday, December 18, 2006

Page 2 of 2  
As presented – Monday 7 February 2005

Presented with Introductory Remarks – Monday 26 March 2007

An Afterword  
Friday 4 May 2007

During my testimony of March 26<sup>th</sup> 2007, I added the extemporaneous thought:

I know how excruciatingly painful the term “Civil Union” has been for so many ... for so long. That is why I suggested the use of a new term, when I first presented these thoughts to this committee two years ago, in February of 2005, but perhaps now, it is a term whose time has come – as long as it is used equally for gay and straight couples alike.

Hence my use of the term “Civil Union” a month later, at a forum held at the University of Connecticut School of Law – remarks following ...

Remarks at *Love Makes a Family* Forum

The University of Connecticut School of Law  
Wednesday – 18 April 2007

Thank you Senator McDonald, for your comments respecting the fact that this issue can not be discussed in a vacuum, without consideration of religion. I appreciate your mentioning a few facts related to a Roman Catholic point of view, and perspective.

I would add, however, that discussion and consideration of various religious points of view and history, is appropriate as related to new legislation concerning marriage and civil unions. We all know *The Church* is not the only church – and Christianity is not the only religion ... just as we know agnostics and atheists are not of one mind or belief.

I believe one of the main reasons we have the problem before us today, is because we in these United States of America ... and very directly here in Connecticut ... are dealing with the vestiges of theocracy.

Ever since I was a little girl, I could not understand why ministers and other clergy acted as agents of the state ... being so aware of all of the discussion, and even anger, acrimony and animosity concerning a whole host of issues related to a phrase I learned at a very early age – *The Separation of Church and State*.

I think we need to have Civil Unions for everyone ... gay and straight ... and leave “the word” – the term “marriage” – strictly to personal and/or religious use – to everyone’s personal and/or religious use ... And truly have *Equality Before The Law* for everyone!!

I do not understand why – especially in a setting such as this – no one is voicing concern about the bedrock constitutional principal of *The Separation of Church and State* ...  
... no one.

This is a transcription of notes drafted by Mary elizabeth-hager Dixon during the course of the above mentioned forum, and used by her, as the basis for comment during the Audience Response Portion of the evening’s program.

FINAL THOUGHTS  
IN CLOSING

Monday 7 May 2007

As I draw this presentation to conclusion, several thoughts keep coming back to mind ...

(1) RE: The sentence on Page 3 of this presentation which reads:

It is my position and strong belief, that neither our state nor our nation should be in the business of conveying the sanctity of sectarian religious blessing to anything.

I would emphatically add ...

And that is exactly what we would be doing if we instituted the state use of the term marriage for single-sex couples. We would be conveying religiously grounded sanctity, sanctification and blessing to single-sex unions by civil law, according to the beliefs of theologically liberal religious belief groups and individuals of various faith traditions, including those of liberal belief and point of view among individuals who believe there is nothing beyond humanity to believe in ... to the detriment, disrespect and insult of theologically more conservative religious belief groups and individuals, and thus would be denying those theologically more conservative religious belief groups and individuals EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW. We would be establishing religious preference, belief and practice for some BY LAW, to the detriment of others – clearly a violation of the constitutional mandate against THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR RELIGIOUS PRACTICE ... and a clear violation of the constitutional principle of the SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

(2) RE: The sentence on Page 5 of this presentation which reads:

I think we need to have Civil Unions for everyone ... gay and straight ... and leave “the word” – the term “marriage” – strictly to personal and/or religious use – to everyone’s personal and/or religious use ... And truly have Equality Before the Law for everyone!!

I would expand these thoughts: (1) to more clearly acknowledge and respect the full and equal rights of all who are given legal standing as couples before the law, and (2) to more clearly acknowledge and respect the full and equal rights of those who are not members of a religious congregation or faith community, those who are not adherents of a religion, those who are agnostics, and those who are atheists, by saying ...

I think we need to have Civil Unions for everyone ... gay and straight ... and have the joining of all couples BEFORE THE LAW accomplished in a brief civil formality in a town or city hall. Should couples wish, such a civil formality could be followed by an optional religious or secular ceremony. I believe the term “marriage” should be stricken from all legal record and reference, in the same way as the Congregational Church was stricken from our law and record, as the established church of our state by our Connecticut State Constitution of 1818, and that clergy no longer act as agents of the state ... another lingering vestige of theocracy through the ages. I believe we need to leave “the word” – the term “marriage” – strictly not to legal use, but to personal, social/cultural, and/or religious or secular/non-religious use – to everyone’s personal, social/cultural, and/or religious or secular/non-religious use ... And truly have Equality Before the Law for everyone!!

Let us indeed, truly have EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW for all who are given legal standing as couples ... let us ensure RESPECT FOR RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE and EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW for all with respect to religion – for religious conservatives, for religious liberals, for religious moderates, and for those of no religion or religious faith, as well ... and let us carefully guard and protect the SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE, which protects us all.

LET THERE BE ...  
*A NEW CONNECTICUT COMPROMISE, 2007*

Let it begin ... HERE AND NOW!



## REPRISE of CONTENTS ... A LIST

### LET THERE BE ... *A NEW CONNECTICUT COMPROMISE, 2007*

Introductory remarks to testimony presented to the Judiciary Committee of  
The Connecticut General Assembly in Public Hearing on *House Bill 7395*  
“*An Act Concerning Marriage Equality*” – Monday March 26, 2007

Transcription of notes used as basis for testimony presented in Public Hearing to the  
Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly on two occasions:  
*Monday February 7, 2005 and Monday March 26, 2007*

An Afterword – Saturday April 28, 2007

Remarks at *Love Makes a Family* Forum – University of Connecticut School of Law  
Wednesday April 18, 2007

Final Thoughts, In Closing – Monday 7 May 2007

Reprise of Contents ... A List

Post Office Box 844  
Tolland, Connecticut 06084  
11 October 2007

Dear

I compiled the following, intending to share copies of it with the full membership of our Connecticut State General Assembly, since neither co-chair of our Connecticut State General Assembly Judiciary Committee has responded favorably to the idea of considering any compromise approach regarding the issue of "Same Sex Marriage" ... not during the Public Hearing of the Judiciary Committee on 7 February 2005, nor during or after the Public Hearing of the Judiciary Committee on 26 March 2007 ... nor during several opportunities I had to speak with each of them about this issue in the intervening time between those two public hearings.

The "pulling" of this issue from the legislative agenda last May, made it seem untimely to share the copies I had prepared with the members of the House and Senate during the 2007 Session of the General Assembly. To date, I have not shared the enclosed compilation with them.

I have wondered since then, learning of the case brought before our Connecticut State Supreme Court, if it would be appropriate to share the compilation I made with the Court.

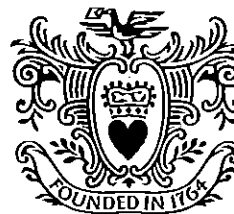
I do not have the means to seek legal guidance on proper judicial protocol and procedure. Therefore, I respectfully share the enclosed compilation with you, asking that you please take a few minutes to review it, and do with it whatever you deem appropriate.

Most sincerely yours,

Mary elizabeth-hager Dixon

## LEADER SPEAK

The markets were free enough so that the Wall Street aristocrats could play free and easy with other peoples' money. They raked in huge payouts while the scams were rolling and left us with a wrecked economy.' **FAV** at [courant.com/readerspeak](http://courant.com/readerspeak).



899  
SATURDAY  
10.11.08 >>6 \*

**com**

AMERICA'S OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED NEWSPAPER  
READ BY 800,000 CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS EVERY WEEK IN PRINT AND ONLINE

# Hartford Courant



MARK MIRKO | [mmirko@courant.com](mailto:mmirko@courant.com)

UConn students Lauren Millerd, center, and Nick Arntsen, right, are among those exulting Friday outside the state Capitol after the state Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have the right to marry.

## GAY RIGHTS

# FREE TO WED

Connecticut Joins Two Other States In Allowing Same-Sex Marriages

By DANIELA ALTIMARI | [altimari@courant.com](mailto:altimari@courant.com)

## MAJORITY OPINION

**T**he state Supreme Court on Friday delivered gay and lesbian couples the validation they have long

as early as next month. It also provides fresh fuel to opponents of same-sex marriage, who are pushing for a mechanism that would permit them to



## CTSPORTS

The Red Sox defeat the Rays, 2-0, in Tampa.

PAGE B1